



At Eastern Connecticut
State University

**Testimony of William Leahy
Institute for Sustainable Energy at Eastern
Connecticut State University
Before the
Energy and Technology Committee
Tuesday, March 17, 2009
Raised Bill 1135**

Good afternoon, Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello and distinguished members of the Energy and Technology Committee. My name is William Leahy and I am the Chief Operating Officer for the Institute for Sustainable Energy (ISE) at Eastern Connecticut State University (ECSU) and I am speaking on behalf of President Elsa Nunez. I am here today to speak in support of **Raised Bill 1135 - An Act Concerning Energy Efficiency Investments in Underserved Communities.**

I support Raised Bill No. 1135 which advocates for energy efficiency and renewable energy programs targeted to underserved poor communities. Connecticut has a number of urban areas which are in a post-manufacturing depression. These communities have inefficient buildings, high unemployment rates and are in need of a more comprehensive approach to meeting their energy challenges. They also provide an opportunity for the state to better manage the reliability of its energy systems. One of the main obstacles to improving the infrastructure in these communities is funding for projects and training for workers to upgrade energy systems in the businesses and residences in these areas.

Job Creation

One of the primary goals of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is to create "family supporting, career tracking, sustainable jobs." The Institute has been working with the administration and faculty of the Connecticut Technical High Schools to revise their curriculum to reflect high performance building standards and alternative fueled vehicles. Another area of focus is Green manufacturing, which is both manufacturing in a more environmentally friendly way, and also building green products for the market. In conjunction with the community colleges, we have identified a continuum of career training that not only provides training for our future trades in high performance "Green" building standards, but also provides re-training for those that are unemployed and underemployed. This training continuum would utilize national certification standards and progress from weatherization specialist, to envelop specialist to energy auditor, while the participants were also learning business skills through the community colleges and the Connecticut State Universities. Following this training, individuals could enter the workforce as home improvement contractors, building operations managers or energy improvement specialists, cost estimators or weatherization supervisors. Through this progression, Connecticut could begin to train a significant portion of the 41,000 Green Collar Jobs identified in the ARRA.

A demonstration project has been launched in the city of **Bridgeport** through an Executive Order initiated by Mayor Bill Finch and a grant by the local business council to create a sustainable Green model city; B-Green2020. The city has created a process which engaging over 100 stakeholders with taskforce activities including; Green Power and Green Buildings, Green Transportation and Brownfield Recovery, Recycling and Green Spaces, Educational Outreach

and Creating 1000 Green Collar Jobs. Members of the six teams include representatives of all major city agencies, the business development organizations, weatherization providers, all the utilities including; electricity generation & distribution, oil and natural gas, providers of alternative fuels and renewable energy, ISE and private developers and citizens. This is truly a Public/Private Partnership. The addition of funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will help to leverage local funds and incentives from the CEEF and CCEF to make a significant difference.

The groups are developing strategies and implement projects to make the community more sustainable by creating “family supporting career tracking sustainable jobs,” creating a green business incubator for new business enterprises, lower the cities energy costs, assist local existing businesses to prosper, educating residents, reduce pollution and GHG emission, and enhance the image and financial strength of the community. Financing for projects will come from a number of sources, including the CT Energy Efficiency Fund through participation with United Illuminating, the CT Clean Energy Fund, the State Energy Program, and the State Weatherization Program. In addition the city will encourage using private investors, developers and financing from Energy Service Companies using Performance Contracts. One project includes establishing building standards and weatherizing all public housing and municipal buildings to improve building efficiency, lower energy bills and the tax burden on the community while making the building more comfortable, and reducing GHG. To accomplish this initiative the city will train hundreds of unemployed or under-employed to be weatherization specialist, utilizing the expertise of the ABCD weatherization organization, conducting training at Bullard Havens Tech High School, utilizing Building Performance Institute (BPI) standards and certification through Housatonic Community College.

A similar project is underway in New Britain where a team consisting of the Mayor, CCSU’s business school and the Institute for Technical and Business Development, ISE, local business leaders and Connecticut’s Department of Labor are developing a project to weatherize the public housing, improve public buildings and create a business incubator center to develop green manufacturing and energy businesses. The objective is to lower energy use and costs while creating sustainable jobs for its community.

Raised Bill No. 1135 would be helpful in supporting these efforts.

Thank you for this opportunity to support your assessment of this important legislation. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have at this time.

Respectfully Submitted;

William M. Leafy